Current Literature

BOOKS IN GENERAL

In a rapidly mobile civilisation like that of Western Europe since the Renaissance, children usually react against the tastes of their parents. Consequently, it often happens that if a writer is appreciated in his lifetime, his reputation starts sinking soon after his death, and does not emerge from the trough of the wave for some fifty years. Browning, who died in 1889, seems to me due for rediscovery. Thirty years ago I learnt to love him from a lady for whose stimulating sympathy with a schoolboy I can never be grateful enough; and I have remained a belated enthusiast for this poetry which most of my contemporaries and juniors neglect or despise. Hardy, who has similar faults, they exalt. It cannot be Browning's obscurity that alarms admirers of Hopkins and Eliot; it cannot be his carelessness that shocks admirers of Spender and Auden. He might, indeed, be thought to commend himself to current taste by his wit, his colloquialisms and his quickness to seize on images from contemporary life. (He was the first poet, I fancy, to refer to photography and to use the word "cocktail".) Let me quote from *Confessions*, to show how much he has in common with some modern writers who have been quicker to learn from him than to praise him:

> What I viewed there once, what I view again
> Where the physic bottles stand
> On the table's edge,—is a suburb lane,
> With a wall to my bedside hand.
>
> That lane sloped, much as the bottles do,
> From a house you could descry
> O'er the garden-wall: is the curtain blue
> Or green to a healthy eye?
>
> To mine, it serves for the old June weather
> Blue above lane and wall;
> And that farthest bottle labelled "Ether"
> Is the house o'ertopping all.

Why, then, is it that contemporary taste cannot admit Browning? I suspect that the chief cause may be his notorious "optimism." Over-production may be another trouble—the 1,500 odd pages of the old dark green collected edition are calculated to quell any unguided reader. I would therefore hopefully recommend a slim volume of selections that has just appeared (*Robert Browning: Poetry and Prose*. With appreciations by Landor, Bagehot, Swinburne, Henry James, Saintsbury and F. L. Lucas. With an Introduction and Notes by Sir Humphrey Milford. Oxford Press. 3*s*. 6*d*). In 176 pages here is almost all the best of Browning, and if Sir Humphrey had omitted the eleven pages of prose, good though this is, he could have found room for the five or six poems that one most sorely misses, *Porphyria's Lover*, *Youth and Art*, *The Statue and the Bust*, the omitted parts of *Waring*. The book is well annotated and well printed, besides being well selected. And my only grave complaint is that some of the "appreciations" might profitably have been replaced by a quotation from Santayana's most damaging criticism, *The Poetry of Barbarism*.

I cannot believe that any reader of this selection will find optimism the prevailing note. On the fifth page, it is true, "God's in his heaven," you may read, "All's right with the world"—and you may then bury the book disgustedly under a sandbag. But as Sir Humphrey points out, Pippa's song is the outburst of a labouring child on a holiday morning; and to the adulterous pair who hear it the words have a threatening meaning. Browning, however, was a devotee of the Life-Force (before the term was invented), which does make him often exasperating to a generation that comprehensibly, though shortsightedly, regards life as a bad business. We cannot, unluckily, catch the mood of *Prospice*; still less can we believe in the happy ending of *Instans Tyrannus*. Furthermore, the Victorians, like the Elizabethans, had a taste for "great thoughts" in verse which we emphatically do not share; and as Browning aged, he increasingly supplied this demand, although, like most poets, he was not a profound thinker. But in his best work the preaching is not usually obtrusive. For this was produced—and it is no accident—when he was living in Italy, far from suet and black horsehair and Exeter Hall, responding with all the fullness of his blood to the sensuousness, animation and spontaneity of the southern scene.

> Open my heart and you will see
> Graved inside of it "Italy."

In richness of temperament Browning was unparalleled among his English contemporaries. (It is possible that he had Jewish blood.) Compared with the lush but exquisite rectory-garden of Tennyson, and the nobly architected but sparely furnished Oxford rooms of Matthew Arnold, Browning's intellectual home was a labyrinthine, ill-kept, baroque Venetian palace, crowded to the attics with curios from every age and clime, gaudy with carved and tarnished gilt, the grand staircase voluble with servants, the *piano nobile* packed with guests eating ices and gossiping through the music, while the canal flickered its reflections upon the sprawling goddesses of the painted ceiling, and you looked down under the striped awnings to a garden with a fountain of peach-coloured Verona marble and vines luxuriating over the breasts of cariatides. Fellow-feeling with the Renaissance is capital in Browning's work. His knowledge of Italian art was wider and deeper than Ruskin's (and, *a fortiori*, than Pater's). He was gigantic in his appetite for looking, listening, talking and reading; for characters, for feelings, for words. He should have been the happiest of men, and I fancy he was; in any case, I know of no writer whose gusto is so infectious. Even in *Sordello*, which I cannot read through, every page is lusty with life:—

> . . . haggard ribalds wandering about
> The hot torchlit wine-scented island-house
> Where Friedrich holds his wickedest carouse,
> Parading,—to the gay Palermitans,
> Soft Messinese, dusk Saracenic clans
> Nuocera holds,—those tall grave dazzling Norse,
> High-cheeked, lank-haired, toothed whiter than the morse,
> Queens of the caves of jet stalactites,
> He sent his barks to fetch through icy seas,
> The blind night seas without a saving star,
> And here in snowy birdskin robes they are . . .

The reader is gasping for breath, but the poet and his muse remain as indefatigable as Jupiter and Alcmena. (There is room, I suggest, for a Browning anthology of a different sort, with short passages from the long poems and single lines, as in Mr. Rylands's admirable *Seven Ages of Man*.) This impetus, this abundance of response, carried the poet with bellying and never-shortened sails to Sargasso Seas and Tuscorora Deeps, where the other Victorians never ventured. I think that Browning not only surpassed his English contemporaries in his awareness of evil, but came nearer to ourselves in his sense of what evil is. A passionate absorption in life, comparable to that of Balzac, whom he greatly admired, swept him away from the primness of a Tennyson and an Arnold—look, for instance, at *Respectability*, *Confessions*, *A Light Woman*, *Two in the Campagna*, *The Statue and the Bust*. His optimism is that of the adventurer, not of the muffish recluse who averts his eyes from unpleasant facts.

According to Henry James, writing in 1890, Browning was then thought rarely quotable. We must hope that the same complaint often made about the poets of to-day will prove equally ungrounded; for I fancy he has added more phrases to the language than any nineteenth-century writer—phrases which, like proverbs, epitomise a sentiment or a situation: "It was roses, roses all the way," "Oh, to be in England Now that April's there," "Ah, did you once see Shelley plain?" "What porridge had John Keats?" "No Tully, said I, Ulpian at the best," "He settled Hoti's business," "How sad and bad and mad it was," "All a wonder and a wild desire," "In Vishnu-land what Avatar," "Dear dead women, with such hair, too," "A fancy from a flower-bell, some one's death, A chorus-ending from Euripides"—but one could go on for a long while, and alas such words grow droopy from passing over too many lips. But they are tokens of Browning's vividness, his genius for catching and holding the attention. Think of the picture of Waring's last appearance, kingly-throated, grass-hatted, under a lateen sail off Trieste; dip, indeed, into almost any of the shorter poems written between 1841 and 1864, and you come on some such passage as this:—

> There came a hurry of feet and little feet,
> A sweep of lute-strings, laughs, and whifts of song,—
> *Flower o' the broom,*
> *Take away love, and our earth is a tomb!*
> *Flower o' the quince,*
> *I let Lisa go, and what good's in life since?*
> *Flower o' the thyme*—and so on. Round they went.
> Scarce had they turned the corner when a titter
> Like the skipping of rabbits by moonlight,—three slim shapes,
> And a face that looked up. . . .

Graphic, lively, charming indeed, you say, but not poetry? Any definition that does not include this as rare poetry seems to me pedantic and insensitive. Browning is justly accounted a careless writer, but in his best work, including longish poems like *Fra Lippo Lippi*, *Andrea del Sarto*, *In a Gondola*, *The Bishop Orders His Tomb*, his style is, to my judgment, no less well sustained than his imagination.

With one complaint against Browning I must admit sympathy. All his virtuosity cannot make attractive, as a *genre*, the humoresque, for which his taste persisted from early poems like *Nationality in Drinks* and *Sibrandus Schafnaburgensis* to *Pacchiarotto*, which cracks the nerves, like a bumping street-drill, with some 600 duosyllabic rhymes. Sometimes one cannot but admire—*Caliban on Setebos*, for instance, or *Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister* or *The Flight of the Duchess*. But one quickly tires, and, what is worse, this vein starts up painfully often in unsuitable places, like the line "Irks care the crop-full bird? Frets doubt the maw-crammed beast?" in a poem about God. This had best be neglected; or endured, as a characteristic part of Browning—and of the nineteenth century, like replicas of gargoyles and Mime in *Siegfried*.

Ultimately the case against Browning may come down to a complaint that he wrote little "pure poetry." It can similarly be urged that Dryden is less pure as a poet than Christina Rossetti, and Chaucer than Monsieur Paul Valéry. Such puritanism is, in intention, no less impoverishing than the puritanism that whittled our cathedrals into the nudity of barracks. Admit that Browning's poetry is barbarous—has not the same accusation been effectively pressed against Shakespeare? And is it not now recognised that some of the most vital art we know has been produced by barbarians? Incidentally, Browning's translation of the *Agamemnon* (from which even Sir Humphrey shies) strikes me as much more like Aeschylus than Arnold's *Merope* is like Sophocles—as well as being incomparably more alive. "Alive" is the word with which I must end, though I should like to have stated a case for Browning as a most inventive master of verbal music. For his genius, like that of Rubens, while it affronts the ascetic, makes magnificently articulate the richness, the peculiarity, the intoxication, of being alive.

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THE GERMANS AND THEIR SOULS

German Odyssey. By OTTO ZAREK, assisted by JAMES EASTWOOD. *Cape.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

This is one more book by a German refugee about life in Germany up to Hitler, and if it is not as stark, sinister and dramatic as the usual run of such books, it is a good deal more original and amusing and none the less instructive. Tolerant and ironical, Herr Zarek has a kindness for his subject which does not, however, lead to any but firmly hostile conclusions. The "good" Germans in whom we like to believe are, he says, also the "bad" ones whom we detest. They like the condition. They know it. They confess it. It is all due to *das Faustische* in their souls: they are indeed the Germans of Goethe with a vengeance, of a Goethe, needless to say, ingeniously misread.

Herr Zarek is the son of middle-class Jewish parents. His father, a lace manufacturer, had that fixed idea which obsessed all German manufacturers: "his mission in life was to overcome all foreign competition." The politics of Bismarck delighted the elder Zarek, the Kaiser he worshipped. As a boy the young Otto was dressed up in oppressive white sailor jackets and taken to see the Kaiser ride by in a procession. "The Kaiser likes to see you boys dressed like that," father would say; and when the boys asked how they could be seen in such a crowd, the reply was: "The Kaiser sees and knows all." The Jews were, of course, kindly treated under the Kaiser; and in his career at school Herr Zarek did not experience any serious anti-Semitism. Even when he and his later theatrical friends, many of whom were Jewish, used to lunch every day at the "Old Vienna" café in Munich, while Hitler, Goering and Roehm scowled and roared at a neighbouring table, there was little anti-Jewish talk. One day, when Elizabeth Bergner was there, someone did shout out something about "the stinking Jews," but Hitler sent an emissary over to Miss Bergner to say how deeply he respected the art of the theatre! This was in the comic days of National Socialism before the Munich putsch, when people bought the *Völkischer Beobachter* in order to laugh at Hitler's leading articles. Miss Bergner told the emissary that she was surprised that one who had such a high esteem for art should wear such an ugly uniform; and the result was that the Nazis were given free tickets for the Kammerspiele Theatre, where Herr Zarek was the producer. They enjoyed and applauded the play, Wedekind's *Lulu*, and then turned up at a second performance and broke it up. As an example of the experimental theatre the Kammerspiele was automatically "immoral" to the Nazis.

The charm of Herr Zarek's book lies in its clever, intimate portraiture of the famous Germans of the period in literature and the theatre. There is an especially interesting study of Toller in the revolutionary days, and it is a portrait which should be compared with Toller's own autobiography. What one missed in that story was any picture of the material out of which Toller proposed to make his revolution, and this is what Herr Zarek supplies. Hitler had to wait seventeen years before he captivated the masses in Munich; but Toller, a stranger to them, an orator who spoke far above their heads, in the language of a philosopher, won them in two or three months. "A man who actually believed his own words was something of a rarity, and everyone was anxious to shake him by the hand." But Munich was ripe for revolution and there was no lack of farce in the situation. Shut up in the Turks barracks were the Bavarian mountaineers, a regiment with ardent sexual habits; they mutinied and were, in fact, shot down in their attempt to get at the girls. The "Venus rebellion," as it was called, had some importance in leading to the final rising. Then there was the rage against the shabby old King who often wandered unnoticed about the streets and who was now generally accused by the mob of tampering with the city's milk supply, through his many dairy farms. "A citizen of Munich was capable of quarrelling with his best friend over the beer mugs, killing the best friend with one of the said beer mugs, bitterly repenting the whole affair next morning. He was usually found by the police at prayer in the local church. The Bavarian revolution happened just like that."

There are delightful portraits of the Manns: Thomas grave, bourgeois, "Hanseatic"; Heinrich rasher and talkative; also an excellent picture of Reinhardt in the theatre and at home. Herr Zarek was often in the position of the promising young author who is taken to see the great and indulgent, and he makes very agreeable use of his memories. One gets an inside picture of intellectual Germany such as rarely comes our way. For English writers, when they went to Germany, were so unobtrusive that they hardly ever visited these circles. It was perhaps as well; for, Herr Zarek says, those who did, came back with the delusion that there was some kind of contact between the civilised intellectuals and the German people. There was no contact. They were already exiles and their situation was the English situation of the last thirty years or so—but to an exaggerated degree.

When Hitler came to power, Herr Zarek got out of Germany and began a discreet flight to Austria and Hungary before he came to England. In Budapest he was a very outspoken anti-Nazi journalist and he began to receive unwelcome visits from the Nazi correspondents. With one of these he became friends, and he records an extraordinary conversation which he had with this very young man, who had grown up in National Socialism, and had experienced all its intellectual discipline. In the course of the conversation the young man broke down suddenly in tears and said that the strain of being without freedom was intolerable, and especially the strain of not being able to speak one's mind. In addition, those who emerged from the Nazi education and came into contact with the free world, were, he said, humiliated by their ignorance. They knew none of their greatest writers. They were ignorant of art, letters and philosophy. They knew the folly of persecuting the Jews, and so on and so on. But, granting all this, the young fanatic cried "one cannot deny Hitler is a great man, a genius who will lead Germany to greatness." The means might not be morally justifiable and "you ask me how one can live under such conditions. I answer that it is in the German nature; it is what we call *das Faustische* in our soul."

How (the Nazi journalists used to ask Herr Zarek) did he manage to get his information? Had he spies? What did he do? It was simple, Herr Zarek replies. You made them drunk, the straining Storm Troopers snapped and confession flowed forth. This is an engaging book.

V. S. PRITCHETT

A MILITARY REVIEW

From Dunkirk to Benghazi. By STRATEGICUS. *Faber and Faber.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

The author of this work has already published a first volume in which he surveys the war up to, and including, the Dunkirk evacuation. This volume begins with the battle of France, and includes by way of an epilogue the fall of Benghazi. Those who liked *The War for World Power* will probably like *From Dunkirk to Benghazi;* it is a straightforward unornamented account by a well-informed observer. But to my mind Strategicus has failed to surmount the difficulties incidental to writing the history

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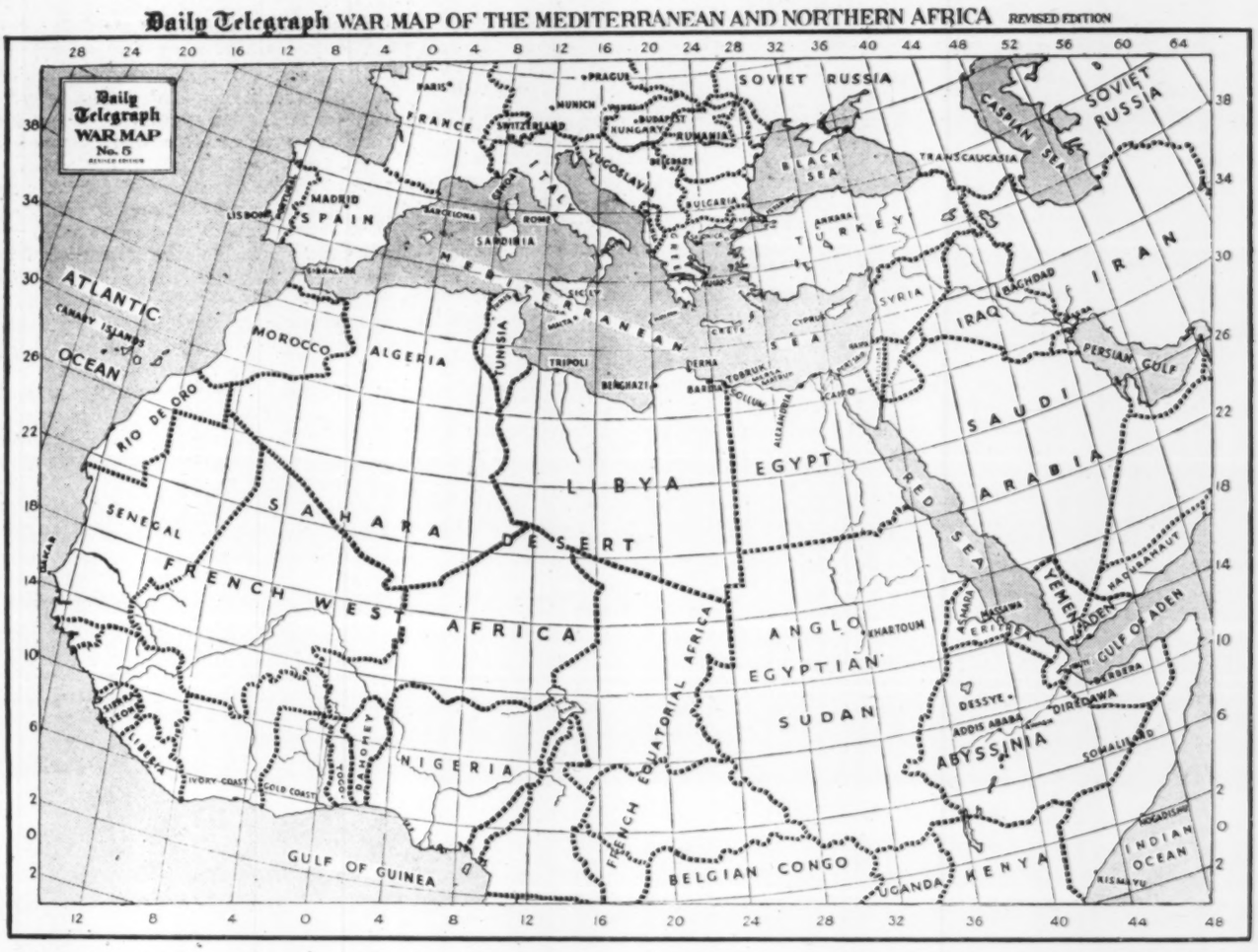

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of an unfinished war. These difficulties are serious. The writer, unless he is able to give an eye-witness account, or is permitted to publish information which the censorship has hitherto suppressed, must find it hard to retain the interest of his reader in events which have ceased to be news, but are not history. In fact, there is very little in this volume that we have not previously heard or read. If Strategicus possessed a prose style of great excellence he might still compel attention. But to this he does not pretend. In consequence, there are many pages of conscientious narrative which might equally well have been expressed in the more compendious form of a detailed chronology. It is therefore particularly regrettable that those passages which are devoted to a consideration of the strategic lessons taught and illustrated by the campaigns of the past year are not longer and more frequent, for in them lies the main interest of the book.

Strategicus is a believer in the supreme and decisive importance of morale. Wherever he passes from record to comment it is to stress this point. Defeatism, and the lack of a clear military strategy, not inferiority in equipment or numbers, are held to be the cause of the fall of France. In the battle of Britain the courage of our aviators is considered of greater importance than the excellence of their machines, while the Libyan campaign is cited as a supreme example of the victory of superior morale against superior numbers and equipment.

There is a measure of truth in this view; it is useful, as Strategicus shows, in his demolition of the absurd "fetish of numbers"; but like all attempts to exalt a single factor in the explanation of military history, it is one-sided and unconvincing in practice, as may be seen by applying the theory to another set of facts. Since the publication of *From Dunkirk to Benghazi* we have gone back from Benghazi to something not unlike Dunkirk. Is this reverse to be ascribed to a collapse in our morale? There is no evidence to suggest anything of the kind. Although God is not invariably on the side of the big battalions, fortune sometimes deserts the brave.

No one in their senses would deny that in the complex of factors which decides the issue of a battle, the courage of the soldier determines the manner in which he will use his weapons, in this very important sense the morale may be said to govern the material. But is it not equally obvious that a well-armed man will find it easier to sustain his courage than his ill-armed opponent? The material also determines the morale. The same principle of mutual determinism may be illustrated in every department of war from the hand-to-hand combat to the direction of national policy. To separate these interacting forces and proclaim the sovereign importance of one of them involves an impossible distortion of history and practice. If we are to seek the causes of military strength and weakness, we shall, I think, find them not in one manifestation of war effort, but in the motor of that effort, which is the State. In modern war, at all events, the qualities of armies and of the weapons they use are intimately connected with the social and economic structure whose instruments they are. In the long run war which is directed at the State as a whole (i.e., economic war) can, by striking at the productive process, outweigh even the finest qualities of morale and leadership, as in the American Civil War, and can also produce startling effects on morale as was shown in the Four Years' War.

In the present European war it would appear that only those States that have a very highly developed industrial system can survive, whether the vigorous but febrile organisms of Japan and Germany can be met and overcome by the sounder, richer, but more timid capitalisms of Britain and the United States, in alliance with an uneasily renascent China, remains to be seen. But victory will not, I think, be achieved as the disciples of Foch hoped to achieve it by the cultivation of a frenzied *élan* in all ranks, but rather by the determined and uncompromising reorganisation of the democratic States for the conduct of total war.

The belief in the supreme importance of morale leads not only to the atrophy of one side of military science, but to the hypertrophy of the other. Thus we find Strategicus defending the "spit and polish" of the guards not because it has any directly useful effect in action, but because of its extraordinary moral effect. One might argue with equal force that the army should receive a daily dose of heroin. The real question, which I am not competent to answer, is whether the discipline of the guards is of a kind suitable for modern warfare, and, if it is not, whether a new and, as it were, "higher" discipline based upon the use of smaller units with greater individual initiative cannot be substituted. The question is, in fact, to what extent the development of new material conditions necessitates the development of a new moral instrument.

QUENTIN BELL

PLASTICS

Plastics. By V. E. YARSLEY and E. G. COUZENS. *Pelican.* 6*d.*

In this war everyone is agreed that the decisive factor is, or will be, production—more production—overwhelming production, production which does not consider the means nor count the consequences. It is hell-for-leather, with the momentum sweeping us through the sluice-gates of the Second Industrial Revolution. All that matters is man-power, machines and materials. And all these are taking new forms—swiftly trained workers, including Bevin's conscript belles; ingenious machines, fresh out of the ice-box; and new materials perfected by the metallurgist and the chemist.

And, unquestionably, the most important of the new materials are the synthetics, and the most important of the synthetics are plastics. To the production engineer, plastics are welcome as an ideal medium of mass production; to the economists who understand their meaning, they are a headache. They represent the freeing of industry from the local ties of raw materials and will promote, unless we come to terms about our world system of production after the war, an incentive to self-sufficiency and political nationalism. We do not joke lightly about German "ersatz" nowadays. Wool out of milk, rubber out of coal, rayon instead of cotton, bakelite instead of wood, perspex replacing glass, and so, seemingly, *ad infinitum*, remind us that accidents of geography which gave countries advantages are of lessening account.

Most people take plastics for granted—the ashtray from Woolworths, the dashboard of the car, their wireless cabinet, their telephone, their hair-comb, their picnic mug or tooth-"glass," and all the other commonplace things. They do not think of them as "plastics" because it is difficult to grasp how anything so hard can be "plastic." It suggests "plasticine," something soft and squeezy. And it is not self-obvious that at one stage these things were soft before they set.

It is important that all of us should be conscious of plastics, but it is even more important that economists, politicians and industrialists should realise their social significance. They do not. That is why the British Association, through its Division of Social and International Relations, staged a conference in Manchester, in "Cottonopolis," just before the war. One part of the conference was devoted to the impact of science on the cotton industry from within and without—without from rayon (it underlined also nylon, the plastic "silk" from coal, air and water). The second part was the development of a new industry—plastics. E. G. Couzens, then, gave us a lively picture of the Seven Ages of Plastic Man. The infant biting on to his plastic teething ring, in a plastic cot, surrounded by a nursery full of plastics; then the schoolboy, dressed in plastics, sitting in a plastic schoolroom—desks, windows, blackboards, and so on, all in plastics, and so through the Ages until *avec* plastic dentures, *avec* plastic-lensed spectacles, *avec* everything he dodders to his end and is buried in a plastic coffin. And just to show that the Seven Ages of Plastic Man, which has been included in this Pelican, is not fantasy, Yarsley and Couzens have reproduced a photograph of the coffin-press which is being used to-day.

Sir Walter
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RITCHIE CALDER

A PLAY ABOUT HITLER

Adversary of Men. By FERENC KÖRMENDI. *Secker and Warburg.* 5s.

Over the week-end Mr. Leslie Henson has been speculating about what can be done by theatres in face of the clothes situation. Wardrobes will have to be unpicked; Beaton 1939 will have to be re-seamed to fashion new elegance. That line is all very well, and no doubt the average stage production will be infinitely better for restriction. But with materials going scarce, why not turn to ideas? Quite a number of theatres are open again in London, but at none of them will the playgoer find even a glimmer of an idea. Spy plays, farces, leg-shows: that is the extent of entertainment. By comparison, the cinemas are showing at least that serious work can be done in war as in any other time. British films, in fact, are better to-day than they have ever been. With the exception of ballet and revivals the stage has done nothing.

Yet there is a new play by Mr. O'Casey unperformed, and no doubt there are other plays which we should benefit by seeing. Ferenc Körmendi's *Adversary of Men* is a play about Hitler: subject taboo on the stage. The fact that the theme is taboo should suggest to an enterprising producer that there are emotions about the war and about Nazism to be tapped even among West End audiences. If *The Mortal Storm* and *Escape* can fill shilling seats, is there any reason why an intelligent play on the same subject should not gather half-crowns and ten-shilling notes? And here is the play. Ferenc Körmendi has managed to put Hitler's career into a dramatic form which would be even more effective in a theatre than on paper. An ingenious framework shows the battle beginning in Heaven, with Satan attacking the rather bureaucratic forces of Good in the committee room. The Light, he points out, is not what it was: see what a miserable mess it has made of humanity through the ages! It is time, argues the Tempter, to let Darkness have its day, and if humanity resists and turns towards God, well and good. So the experiment is tried; and in the little Adolf, pulling legs off flies and striking his mother, Satan finds an instrument for his policy.

The earlier scenes show us the stupid, rebellious schoolboy, the would-be artist and shabby house-painter, the agitator, the lead-swinging corporal. Adolf has the first of his visions when Satan visits him in a hospital behind the lines; the glimpse of world power miraculously restores his sight, damaged by shell-shock. From that moment Adolf works ruthlessly, though with moments of harassing weakness, towards his end. We see him plunged in despair during the moments when he is waiting to make his first speech at the Berlin stadium. Then comes the frenzied attack on the Jews, the blood-bath of Munich, preparations for war. While Hitler, with his yells and periods of abasement, still holds the centre, the picture enlarges to include scenes from the lives of S.S. men, of women in bread-queues, of refugees passing the frontiers, the visit of a foreign ambassador, Austria and Czechoslovakia, followed by the onslaught against Poland. It is at this point that Satan, who has a private stairway at Berchtesgaden, begins to feel that things are getting out of hand. Hitler isn't keeping his word! He even hints at Fifth Columns and a Gauleiter in Hell. So Satan goes back to the conference table of the Powers of Light and confesses that his experiment has failed.

Adversary of Men has many virtues besides being actable. The touch of playful irony in the heavenly discussions mingles with sharp portraiture of the leading gangsters, and the scenes of the Terror among common people are restrained and extremely moving. Hitler himself is brilliantly sketched—or rather it is more than a sketch: caricature with psychological depth. The usual fault of plays of this sort—portentousness—is avoided in all except a few abstract passages, which might be cut. Well, here, thanks to the war, is an intelligent playwright in our midst. What are our producers going to do about it?

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of Nature's Germans like Romain-Rolland—would have spread over 25 books.

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> Even if the composer is as great a master of literature as Schumann, Berlioz, and Dame Ethel Smyth, difficulties will always arise from the fact that the literary explanation will not be directed to the same recipients as the music, for no musician can wish words to intrude between him and another musician.

Yet the problem is not simple, for those whose business it is to expound music to a largely non-learned audience cannot afford the exact, technical severity of Tovey's approach (even supposing they can command it), but must sail somewhat nearer the wind of the typical programme note. Now the chief trouble with most programme notes is that their non-technical language always fails to give the listener any idea of how long any particular passage is likely to last, so that the movement comes to an end while he is still anxiously looking out for that "plaintive oboe phrase" or that "note of tragedy introduced by a sudden tremolo on the lower strings," both of which occurred while he was still laboriously spelling out the "meaning" of the first group of themes. Great—i.e. useful—criticism is thus in the last resort always technical; and anyone who has taken the trouble to master the language of musical theory would vastly prefer a Tovey analysis of, say, the C sharp minor Quartet to Wagner's famous paragraph, which is nothing but a literary description of the most subjective order. Such words, far from elucidating, do, indeed, merely "intrude" between composer and audience.

The basic musical problems, as treated in these lectures, are seen as those of texture, movement and form. Meaning—expression—resolves itself, as one would expect in such hands, into *musical* meaning: for Tovey no music is so expressive as when it is "absolute," and no symphonic poem or opera as dramatic as a symphony by Mozart. This point of view derives from the conviction, supported by the history of the art, that "even in purely instrumental music, the composer should be primarily a rhetorician." It is important to remember this, for it bears with it the corollary that all music without exception has poetical aims in view, and that there is, in fact, no musical equivalent of expository prose or utilitarian drawing. The nearest approach to prose in music is, I suggest, the texture-form of fugue, which, however, Tovey compares rather to blank verse. In any case, only the worst kind of academic fugue has the flatness of a topical leader-article; the rhetorical effect of the Forty-Eight is simply the result of a poetical inspiration which chose that form of expression. But "poetical" should here be understood in a special sense. Bergson has pointed out that the emotions we find in music "have not been taken from life by art; it is we who, in order to express them in words, are compelled to translate the feeling created by the artist by that which most nearly resembles it in life." That, it seems to me, is a remark which leads far—to a surmise, in fact, that, whatever the emotions which generate a piece of "absolute" music, those which its performance induces may be, if not *sui generis*, at any rate complexes of feeling unlike, both in organic result and in intensity, any created by our circumstances. The soliloquy of a Chopin Mazurka, for instance, deals in a combination of gaiety and sadness which finds no adequate echo in experience, even at a lower level of intensity: the emotion is totally peculiar and seems to demand elucidation by reference to other works written in the same language. Thus, the first movement of Chopin's B flat minor Sonata is a far more adequate comment on Mozart's G minor String Quintet than any verbal gloss could possibly be; and in the same way those odd, declamatory cadenzas that Beethoven introduced into his last sonatas are, as Busoni pointed out, simply "music about music."

Tovey's views on the other two basic aspects of the art—movement and form—proceed naturally from his summary of the general texture of music as "essentially and centrally the texture of choral polyphony, with a background and framing of all that arises from the nature of instruments designed partly to imitate and transcend voices, and partly to support and contrast with them. The vocal aspect is typified by song, and the instrumental aspect by dance." As regards the aspect of movement, Tovey is concerned mainly with the frequent failure to apprehend the two kinds of movement distinguishable in music—the "cosmic" or large-scale kind and that which obtains within single sections, whether discreet or not. Elsewhere he has some acute remarks on the disadvantage of modern harmonic systems, such as Atonality and Polytonality, in the construction of large-scale works.

> The harmony of the dramatic sonata-style of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven is in detail simpler than that of Bach, because you cannot build large-scale relations of key on a basis of elaborate harmonic detail, any more than you can construct a dramatically exciting play out of epigrams.

Which reminds one that the modern key-systems derive from the chromaticism of Bach and Chopin, and not from the great symphonists, whose thought was in the main diatonic. It was also largely homophonic, whereas the new systems tend inevitably towards polyphony—and this is perhaps why Tovey shows an especial interest in them, for his own mind moved essentially on polyphonic lines—a tendency which caused him to utter the needed warning that, although musical logic rarely appears on the surface, "the total impression of good counterpoint is good harmony"—a fact deliberately disregarded by "advanced" composers since Strauss cut a dash in those parts of *Also sprach Zarathustra* and *Ein Heldenleben* which led Richter to remark that it was not difficult to write counterpoint if you did not mind what it sounded like. Those passages have since been made to look pretty tame: at all events, the harmony they involve is limpidity itself when compared with a clotted page of the later Schönberg. Music which requires a new aural training wherewith to apprehend and derive pleasure from it is as suspect as poetry which demands from the reader constant reference to an *apparatus criticus;* without condemning either the one or the other outright, one is not surprised when further examination reveals a veil of mystery spread over something neither new nor particularly interesting. I leave the conclusion to Tovey himself:

> Atonality and polytonality are severe discipline. I feel sceptical about their independence and novelty, especially when I find that a violinist who has great difficulty in finding the correct intonation of a thread in a polytonal composition can play it with ease if I support it on the commonplace and slightly oily Spohr-like harmonies which I suspect to have been lurking at the back of the composer's mind.

For all his scholarship and the judicious intelligence which refused to accept anything on trust, Tovey was no academician, and he is perfectly definite in his repeated assertion that formal orthodoxy is almost only found in composers who no longer matter. The scholastic fugue appears in Klengel, but not in Bach; the perfect example of sonata-form perhaps only in the work of Spohr. This is important in view of Tovey's assertion, fundamental to these lectures, that artistic wholeness is a type of infinity and that the conditions of music are specially favourable to the actual attaining of such perfection. This truth is easier to

appreciate in the case of "absolute" instrumental music than in that of vocal or programme music, or opera; yet what is easily seen as true of one must really be true of all, or the description is useless. Musical forms are now undergoing a revaluation, from which a new series may be expected to arise. Tovey would have been the first to see the necessity of this evolution and to welcome it, but with the proviso that "that which transcends knowledge will never come without knowledge": in other words, you must learn to draw in one perspective before you can hope successfully to experiment, like Matisse or Picasso, in several at once; and that you must be able to write "correct" counterpoint and straightforward diatonic harmony before attempting an idiom such as Bartok's, which, being polytonal, corresponds to the use, within a single canvas, of as many points of focus as there are objects in the composition.

It is difficult to give an idea of the richness of these lectures except in the oblique and discursive manner I have here adopted. Few, if any, musicologists have written as well or as stimulatingly as Tovey: his style unites the ease and piquancy of conversation with the profound accuracy of the best philosophical prose. Never solemn, he possessed the witty mind of a truly serious critic and artist. These two little books contain the essence of his thought, which is to be seen exemplified and expanded in the six volumes of that capital work, the *Essays in Musical Analysis*. Had he lived to revise these pages, he might perhaps have excised a few repetitions incident to the lecture form; he could hardly have improved the general outlines or the method of exposition, which will remain a model of what such things should be.

So much for the critic; justice has yet to be done to the composer. Will not the B.B.C. follow up their recent broadcast of the grand Piano Concerto with some of the chamber music, excerpts from the opera, *The Bride of Dionysus*, and even—why not?—the magnificent and far-flung Cello Concerto? For Tovey is one of those rare composers (Busoni is the classic case and Cherubini may be another) whose music looks dry and conventional on a cursory view, but close attention to which reveals a beauty at once original and profound.

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Though this is one of a practical series, "How to do it," Mr. Carrick has succeeded, intentionally or not, in writing a book of more general interest. The importance of the art designer in such films as *Doctor Caligari* or *Le Million* is of course obvious even to the least instructed; but not so many think of the designer in connection with *The Great Dictator*, *Foreign Correspondent* or *The Grapes of Wrath*. Sometimes the reasons for this neglect or ignorance are understandable. *The Great Dictator*, for example, was not a film remarkable for its pictorial effects, and it will come as a surprise to Mr. Carrick's readers to find on p. 36 of his book a design by André Andrijew more striking, pictorially, than any of the scenes in Chaplin's film. Half a dozen more of Andrijew's designs for various films have the same imaginative quality. His talent, one imagines, is largely wasted in Hollywood; two stills from *Whom the Gods Love*, set beside Andrijew's designs, show that little or nothing of the quality of the originals has been transferred to celluloid. The same might be said of L. P. Williams' delightful sketches for *While Parents Sleep*. On the purely technical side Mr. Carrick tells us something about the building-up of sets: realism is achieved by every manner of *ersatz*, from lath and plaster tree-trunks to drinking glasses made of toffee and spiders' webs spun by a special machine from rubber solution floured with fuller's earth. After reading this book we are made to realise that even the worst film is a conjuring trick on a fantastic scale.

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WOLSEY HALL, OXFORD

MISCELLANEOUS

FOR SALE. Royal Typewriter. Standard model, perfect condition, as new, not rebuilt. Bargain £30. No dealers. Box 9299.

WANTED. Secondhand, Standard books on Psycho-analysis. Freud, Abraham, Ferenczi, Jones, etc. Box 9300.

MINIATURE cameras wanted. Leica, Contax, Rolleiflex, etc. Highest prices in England offered. WALLACE HEATON, LTD., 127 New Bond Street, W.1.

YOUR favourite suit copied exactly in "John Peel" Cumberland Tweed, £5 5s. 0d., tax extra. Fit guaranteed or money refunded. Patterns free. REDMAYNE, 10 Wigton, Cumberland.

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THERE IS A SHORTAGE of King Six 8d. Cigars, but only in the sense that we can never have enough of a good thing.

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Complete Teachers' Training for Girls in all Branches of Physical Education, Gymnastics, Games, Dancing, etc. Recognised training centre for London University Diploma in Physical Education and Certificate of the Chartered Society of Massage and Medical Gymnastics.
Apply: SECRETARY, Anstey College, Erdington, Birmingham.

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AUTHOR (war correspondent) translates from Scandinavian, German, Romance languages into English, French. Box 9287.

DE SADE, Les Infortunes de la Vertu ("Justine"), Paris 1930, Editions Fourcade, introduction by Maurice Heine, numbered copy 1343. English half-binding in maroon calf. This is the first published edition reproducing the author's original manuscript in the Bibliotheque Nationale. £10. Box 9302.

ACCOMMODATION

SWISS COTTAGE. Attractive, comfortable, unfurnished studio-rooms, 10s. to 17s. 6d. Service optional. 16 Belsize Square. PRI. 6165.

DIVAN room, sharing communal kitchen offered man or woman, share of expenses. 17s. 6d. Garden. Pri 0878.

ROOM OFFERED, non-church, return help, small bungalow, Glos. Describe interests, circumstances. Box 9317.

Wanted

DOCTOR'S Wife (husband in the Services), confinement August, wishes accommodation (within fifty miles London and near good nursing home for confinement). From end June and after. Full particulars and terms. Box 9304.

R.A.F. officer wishes rent furnished small country cottage for week's leave in early August. Box 9305.

Week-end Competitions

No. 592

Set by William Whitebait

We offer the usual prizes for a ballad (limit 20 lines) on a war profiteer, a happy W.A.A.F., or a harassed leader-writer. This gives competitors the choice of being violent, carefree or compassionate, as they please.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Monday, June 16th.

2. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 589

Set by V. S. Pritchett

Competitors are asked to imagine that the B.B.C. Home Service has been in existence from the beginning of history. The usual prizes are offered for the nine o'clock bulletin on any of the following events: the Burning of Joan of Arc, the Trial of Oscar Wilde, the Murder of Thomas à Becket, the Landing of William of Orange, the Death of Gordon, the First Flight of an Aeroplane, the Dutch Sailing up the Thames.

Report by V. S. Pritchett

The entries in this competition were as complete a satire on the B.B.C. Home Service as could be desired. All the stock phrases, all the reticences, all the complacency and some leavening of those surprising touches of bathos which get into the bulletins were skilfully pilloried. The burning of Joan of Arc, the murder of Becket and the appearance of the Dutch Fleet in the Thames were overwhelmingly the most popular. It was pleasant to think of hearing the voice of Samuel Pepys "spreading it" or Daniel Defoe "reading it." E. V. Milner was good about Becket with a delicious remark by the Bishop of Durham who, addressing the Curfew Ringers Association said: "The public must beware of regarding Becket as a hero. He was nothing of the kind, his record being as black as that of any other member of the party." The euphemisms about the death of Becket were inventive. I liked the rumour that he was presumed to have died on the altar steps as the result of a stroke. Joan of Arc, of course, appears as a French Quisling and Richard Dimbleby is frequently saying what glorious weather there was at the time of the kill. There is not space to quote the large number of amusing passages, but I liked the entries of Joan Messenger, H. C. Withers, D. E. Simmons, and a very original M. D. S. Kirk. There were three kinds of entries, the farcical, the ye olde, and the only too probable. My preference is for the farcical, but it seems unfair to impose a personal taste, so I suggest the prizes are equally divided between the three schools of thought represented by Reginald Reynolds, M. D. S. Kirk and Norman Harrison.

I

THOMAS A BECKET

The probable destruction of Thomas à Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury, is announced to-day in a Ministry of Information communiqué. Becket was attacked by four British knight-fighters, acting under the personal command of His Majesty the King. A number of direct hits are known to have been scored, and Becket is regarded in military circles as a total loss.

Reconnaissance by varlets in the earlier part of the day revealed that Becket was sheltering in a South-East Cathedral, where he was later attacked by our knight-fighters, who pierced his hair shirt in several vital spots. It is pointed out in London to-night that the Archbishop, being a military objective, had no right of sanctuary, and the matter will be taken up with the Dean through the usual diplomatic channels. Weather conditions were extremely favourable to this daring enterprise and all our knights returned safely to their base.

Rumours that His Majesty the King has expressed misgivings with regard to this action are entirely without foundation. His Majesty is known to have expressed the strongest views regarding the liquidation of the Archbishop, and there is no division of opinion in Government circles. One of the four knight-fighters will give his own account of this successful expedition immediately following the news bulletin, and to-night's commentary, by the Earl of Norfolk, will deal with the significance of this achievement. REGINALD REYNOLDS

II

THE DEATH OF THOMAS BECKET, A.D. 1170

". . . We announce with deep regret the death, reported yesterday, of His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury, Mgr. Thomas Becket, at the age of fifty-two. His Grace, whose death took place suddenly in Canterbury Cathedral, is believed to have slipped and fallen on his way to vespers. He had but recently returned from a prolonged visit to France.

"The late Primate, whose father held a prominent position in local politics, was educated at Merton Priory and entered full public life under the patronage of the late Archbishop Theobald. Most listeners will remember Mgr. Becket, a Norman, best for his two outstandingly English qualities of sportsmanship and statesmanship. It has been considered a pity that the great Chancellor whose able counsel achieved the peace of 1154 should, on reception of the pallium, devote to eccentrically intransigeant theocratic poses the time hitherto so patriotically used. . . . At the end of this news the Dean of Salisbury will broadcast an appreciation of the Archbishop from a general angle, and we hope to obtain a personal interview with Sir Reginald Fitzlbroe, on 'The Archbishop as Lord and Vassal,' contributing a more individual note. . . ."

MILES D. S. KIRK

III

B.B.C. NINE O'CLOCK NEWS

The Dutch begin the sail up the Thames, June 11th, 1667. 'Tis nine of the clocke and 'tis Saml. Pepys who reads.

This day the Kinge is from Greenwich and this afternoone he was to the Theatre Royall. Unconfirm'd tales do reach us of how the Dutch have possessed themselves of Sheernesse and about it.

Mr. Dryden did this day accepte commission to write for the Kinge's Theatre.

The Oration at the College Royall has by Royall Order been stopt to discomforte the hereticall Descartesianes.

The Kinge is from Greenwich this day. Before he did leave Dr. Wren did meett him, who's been order'd to the rebuilding of the Citie. To London and to Mr. Dryden's "Secret Love" at the Theatre Royall. The Kinge was much o'erstruck with Florimel who, they say, is play'd by some unknown Nell Gwynne.

The Kinge wore a close coatt of cloth pinkt, wth. a white taffety under the cutts. Upon this a sercoatt cutt at the breast which hung loose. The breeches the Spanish cutt and buskins of leather being of the same colour.

The Dutch did make small advances at Sheernesse. They did incurr very heavy losses and an unconfirm'd report from Buda-Pest tells of the capturing of halfe a score of seamen. A communique from G.H.Q. Chatham says good progress is being made. Genl. Munke did arrive yesterday at that towne and himselfe is over seeing to the receptione of the Dutch wh. prommises to be "hotte."

Severalle alarmist tales are put about that the Kinge is to abdicate. Soe much more to show these compleat absurdities the Kinge has graciously sent to the publiq: "The Kinge is very cheerfull tonighte and is at supper wth. his mistresses as usual."

This day Mr. Dryden . . . NORMAN HARRISON

A Cornish War Medallist

MORE NEED THAN EVER FOR HIS *magnificent service*

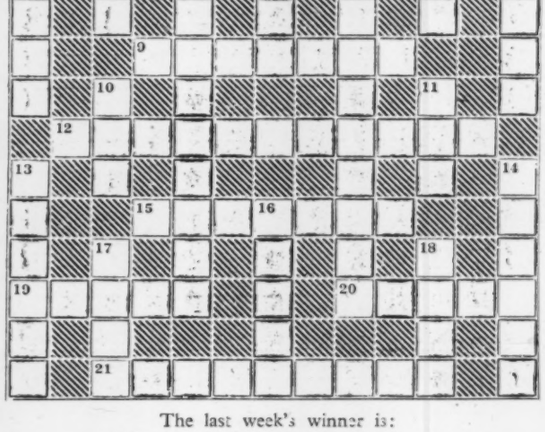
In the first year of War the Life-boat Service rescued over 2,000 lives. More lives were rescued in one year of War than in the last five years of Peace.

Send a contribution, however small, as your share in this great work.

ROYAL NATIONAL
LIFE-BOAT INSTITUTION
Life-Boat House, Boreham Wood, Herts.
The EARL OF HARROWBY, Hon. Treasurer, Lt.-Col. C. R. SATTERTHWAITE, O.B.E., Secretary.

We very much regret that, owing to the restriction of paper, we shall be unable to continue our crossword. This week's puzzle will be the last, and the solution will be published as usual next week.

WEEK-END CROSSWORD 35 *Set by* V. S.



The last week's winner is:
H. Burton, 60 King Street, Manchester 2

ACROSS

2. Seat of Justice? (9)
6. My hon. friend turned cunning at the beginning of March. (5)
8. Take steps to get rid of sunburn. (5)
9. Sure to spill if overturned. (7)
12. Made one go out of one's mind? (11)
15. Soften a paint. (7)
19. Nobody's in the office at 3 o'clock. (5)
20. (*rev.*) Another such communiqué won't do us any harm. (5)
21. The dead smell! (9)

DOWN

1. It's a catch to make us save weight. (6)
2. Break the seal. (4)
3. Haggard girl will fit the breeches? (5)
4 & 17. Posted in the Spanish Guard. (8)
5. Handsome as any fellow in existence. (6)
7. Has no reason to be more economical with mortar. (9)
8. The nippy might thriftily put both right in the stocking. (3, 3 & 3)
10 & 11. You have to allow the King's bluff is deadly. (6)
11. See 10
13. He took the pledge in Kansas? (6)
14. Bolshevik Bill. (6)
16. Foreign capital issued @ 1/-. (5)
17. See 4
18. Unable to make a pot of tea? (4)

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD

Books to the value of Five Shillings may be chosen by the sender of the first correct solution opened. Post solutions to arrive not later than first delivery Wednesday following the date of issue, addressed to "CROSSWORDS," "NEW STATESMAN AND NATION," 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

THE WEEK IN THE CITY

By URBANUS

THE STOCK EXCHANGE AND THE RATIONING SCHEME —PRICES OF LUXURIES—CONCENTRATION

THE post-Whitsun markets were not able to stomach the mixture of bad news from Crete with sudden shocks from the Board of Trade. A sinking feeling developed. The store shares were particularly weak, and this is not surprising when the clothes rationing scheme is understood. Although the total amount of raw materials and labour employed in the clothing and boot and shoe factories is not to be any smaller under the coupon scheme—indeed it may be slightly larger if all the coupons issued are presented in the shops—two points emerge which are "bear" points for the chain and departmental stores. In the first place the Board of Trade is seizing this opportunity to force wholesalers to distribute their stocks more equitably between big shop and little shop. In the short period allowed to retailers to stock up without coupons, wholesalers are not allowed to supply any one retail company with more than 10,000 coupons' worth of goods (say, from £750 to £1,000 worth). The chain stores will therefore not be able to place their usual big orders and snatch goods away from the small shops. In the second place, the coupon system drastically cuts down the expenditure on clothes of the average well-to-do customer of the departmental stores. The 66 coupons allotted to each individual represent from £5 to £10 worth of goods a year, whereas the clothes expenditure of the average upper middle class woman will probably range from £50 to £100 a year. (The wealthier well-dressed woman will normally spend £500 to £1,000 a year.) The undeniably high profits from this fashionable dress trade will now be lost to the departmental stores—and at a time when their trade in all household goods has been severely cut down by the quota system of the Limitation of Supplies Orders. I repeated my advice only last week that the consumption goods shares were overvalued relatively to the capital goods shares and happily mentioned Marks and Spencer 5s. shares at 30s. 3d., to yield under 5¾ per cent., as being dear in comparison with steel shares yielding over 10 per cent. Here are other market prices and yields in the store group :—

	Price	Div. % 1938	Div. % 1940	Yield %
Woolworths 5/- ..	48/-	65	65	6.7
Marks & Spencer, 5/- ..	30/6	42½*	35	5.7
Harrods £1 ..	24/-	16	4	3.6
John Barker £1 ..	29/6	15	10	6.7

* Plus capital bonus of 10 per cent.

Woolworths is the only one of the big stores which has not yet reduced its dividend.

* * *

If the clothes rationing scheme were only designed to distribute more fairly the existing stocks of clothing and boots and shoes it would be a somewhat cumbersome machinery, but it has the merit of forcing the richer classes to spend less, save more and buy War Bonds. Out of the pre-war national dress bill of £500 millions a year the rich will probably have accounted for more than half. In discussing the question of consumption and savings last week I emphasised the argument that abstention from consumption was best achieved by rationing and, as a second best, by allowing the prices of luxuries to rise to prohibitive levels. There is the suggestion that the Board of Trade is proposing to follow up its excellent rationing scheme with an amendment to the Prices of Goods Act to prevent a rise in the prices of rationed goods. As the rationing scheme is by points and not by values, and as this is an inducement to the consumer to buy the higher grades for durability, the prices of such long-lasting clothes as fur coats will rise rapidly in price. If this is what the Board of Trade wants to prevent, I suggest that it is a big mistake. Consumption of luxuries is discouraged by allowing prices to rise to prohibitive levels. If the poorer classes cannot afford to buy good quality clothes, it is only fair to prevent the rich gaining too big an advantage over them by letting the prices they pay become prohibitive.

* * *

The Chairman of British Enka, rayon manufacturers, reports in his annual review that the company has been granted by the Board of Trade the status of a nucleus firm in the concentration scheme for the rayon industry. This presumably means that it has been recognised as running "full time." Courtaulds, on the other hand, have closed down, it is understood, three of their factories and have released thousands of men for munitions. Now that the dates for effecting voluntary mergers in the concentration scheme have passed, the Board of Trade will proceed to the appointment of nucleus firms. This procedure will have to be watched, for the appointment of nucleus status confers great advantages on the recipients—for example, reservation of labour, the guarantee of raw materials and the protection of factories against requisitioning. The question is whether the appointment also confers official blessing on the schemes of compensation to closed-down firms, involving levies, the cost of which may be passed on to the consumer. But is it not more important to protect the consumer than the investor ?

Company Meeting

SMITH'S POTATO CRISPS

PROFITS & DIVIDEND MAINTAINED

THE twelfth ordinary general meeting of Smith's Potato Crisps (1929), Limited, was held on 4th June at the Holborn Restaurant, London, W.C.

Sir Herbert E. Morgan, K.B.E. (the chairman), said : You will no doubt have seen that we propose to pay the same dividend as last year, together with the same cash bonus, and this, from the shareholders' point of view, is probably the most interesting statement that I can make.

A comparison of the trading between this year and last shows that the results are practically identical, the only outstanding difference being an increase of about £28,000 in our provision for taxation. This is a burden that we must all bear cheerfully and take satisfaction from the fact that we make such a contribution towards the country's resources.

You will notice that our "Cash at Bankers" and "In Hand" has reached, as far as we are concerned, the record figure of £145,371. This is apart from our liquid investments, which total £111,610. These two items together show an increase of £19,351 over last year.

Since the publication of the accounts the directors felt that we should play our part in subscribing further to the national War Loan. We did this by investing £126,000 through the Chiswick and Brentford branch in London's War Weapons Week.

STRONG FINANCIAL POSITION

The maintenance of our profits and the strength of our financial position are proof positive of the soundness of the enterprise. It is a privilege to be able to say at this twelfth annual general meeting of the company, that since the days of its creation we have made increasing progress and steadily gathered strength.

In reviewing the fortunes of your company, I do not think I can over-emphasise how much of its success is due to its product—Smith's Potato Crisps.

Put broadly, Smith's Crisps are six times as nutritious as ordinary potatoes and produce six times as much heat and energy. The ordinary boiled potato has only 18 per cent. of solid food—Smith's Crisps have 92 per cent. The dietary defect of the ordinary potato is that it contains no fats. Smith's Crisps cooked in fine oil contain 33 per cent. of fats.

In boiling the potato many of its valuable mineral salts are lost. That is why all cookery experts urge housewives not to waste their potato water. In Smith's Crisps every atom of the valuable mineral salts is preserved—encased in oil. Cooked in pure oil that is a substitute for the fats lacking in the potato, Smith's Crisps are easily digested, most nourishing, do not fatten, and contain valuable vitamins. In addition, Smith's Crisps are an excellent emergency food. The lightest, most portable food. They can be taken on a journey and taken to the air-raid shelter. They need no cooking, will keep a considerable time, and are invaluable for men on active service, or any of the many workers in these times who have great strain and uncertain hours for meals. Prepared and packed under the most hygienic conditions, Smith's Crisps are one of the most nutritious and valuable foods.

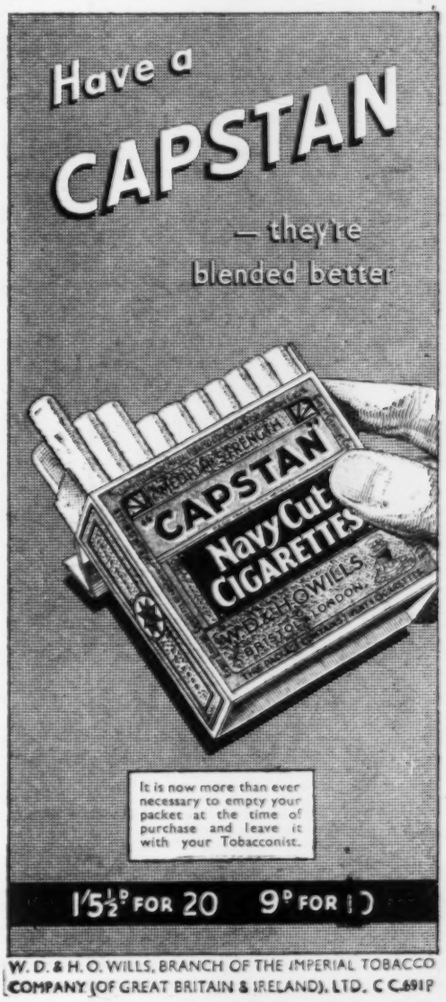
POPULARITY MAINTAINED

As regards our product, that, I can say, has more than maintained its popularity. A certain shortage at times has only accentuated the eagerness of the public to obtain supplies. Needless to say, the demand for the troops has been on a very large scale and we have done our best to cope with it.

I should like to suggest here that the public must have a sympathetic understanding of the difficulties facing the retailer, not only in connection with such a product as ours, but of all products in general demand. It is not a pleasure to him to be unable to supply his customers ; it is not a pleasure to him to say, "I am sorry we have no Crisps to-day." Everybody concerned in the retail trade has had their own special worries to face. I am sure all retailers appreciate their wholesalers' and manufacturers' problems.

I am glad to say that our great agricultural enterprise in one of Britain's most fertile counties has maintained its progress and is playing its full share in the production of food for the nation.

The report and accounts were unanimously adopted.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— they're blended better
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